



UNISON

Yorkshire and Humberside



Branch Officer Training

Course Programme

May 2026

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Welcome

Welcome to Yorkshire & Humberside's Regional Education and Training Programme.

First, a huge thank you for everything you do for UNISON members in Yorkshire & Humberside and for taking on these vital roles. Active reps in branches are essential to supporting members—and the role is incredibly rewarding for you too.

UNISON activist courses are designed to set you on your journey: giving you the knowledge and skills you need to get started or to develop further. They also offer valuable networking opportunities with reps from across the region. Remember, support is always available within your branch and the Region—you're never alone.

We're delivering training in more locations across Yorkshire & Humberside, removing barriers by bringing learning closer to branches and activists. Each year, we aim to include courses at Local Learning Hubs in Sheffield (South Yorkshire), Northallerton (North Yorkshire), Hull (East Riding), and Grimsby (Lincolnshire), alongside training at our Regional Centre in Leeds. This programme ensures access to the most up-to-date UNISON training for both new and experienced activists. Growing our activist base with well-equipped, motivated individuals makes us stronger. These courses build confidence and develop practical skills—we're sure both you and UNISON will benefit. It's never too late to learn.

UNISON College brings together all learning, education, and training for members and activists into one coherent offer. Building on our tradition of high-quality training, it equips activists with the confidence, knowledge, and experience to advocate for members and empower them to shape their careers. UNISON College continues to grow, offering online and face-to-face learning, plus a wide range of courses, workshops, and e-notes.

Branch development is key to recruiting, organising, and retaining members. Increasing membership and developing activists from all sectors makes us stronger and more representative. Branches and the Region work together to ensure no member is out of pocket when attending UNISON courses—travel and carer costs can be claimed from your branch with prior agreement.

We also offer a separate members-only training programme, available on our website. Our learning environment is friendly, relaxed, and supportive, giving you the chance to meet new people, build networks, and share knowledge. Working together with other trade unionists to achieve common goals is at the heart of what we do.

Please make the most of our learning offer—and share your feedback. We're always striving to improve your experience. We hope you enjoy what's on offer, and we firmly

continues...

believe UNISON has the best-trained activists of any union in the UK.



Wendy Nichols
Regional Convenor



Karen Loughlin
Regional Secretary

Course Structure

For the first time in 2026, we are holding our Y&H Branch Officer Training event and our UNISON Yorkshire & Humberside Awards celebration in the same venue on the same date. This is a high profile event where we will be celebrating significant achievements by individuals, teams, branches, and workplaces throughout the past 12 months. More information on the awards, including categories, is included on page 14.

All delegates to our Officer training event will receive an invitation to join this Saturday evening meal and celebration event.

Y&H Branch Officer Training

	Time	Venue
Saturday 16th May	8:45 – 17:00	Doubletree by Hilton, Leeds
Sunday 17th May	9:30 –13:00	Doubletree by Hilton, Leeds

UNISON Yorkshire & Humberside Awards Night

Saturday 16th May	18:30 til late	Doubletree by Hilton, Leeds
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Course Fees

We have two price options:

Non – Residential Rate includes 2 days training and invitation to our evening meal/awards event.	£100
Residential Rate includes 2 days training, invitation to our evening meal/awards event, plus: Saturday overnight accommodation and breakfast at Doubletree by Hilton Leeds	£250

2026 Calendar of Courses

Training Course	Dates	Apply by	Venue
Branch Treasurer OLBA Training	29 April 2026 (9.30-13:00)	27-Mar-26	Online, via UNISON National Finance Team
Branch Treasurer OLBA Training	1 May 2026 (9.30-13:00)	01-Apr-26	Online, via UNISON National Finance Team
Branch Treasurer OLBA Training	7 May 2026 (9.30-13:00)	06-Apr-26	Online, via UNISON National Finance Team
Welfare Officer Training	13, 20 May 2026 (10:00-13:00)	10-Apr-26	Online, via There for You
Branch Treasurer OLBA Training	15 May 2026 (9.30-13:00)	13-Apr-26	Online, via UNISON National Finance Team
Branch Secretary	16, 17 May 2026	02-Apr-26	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
Branch Chair	16, 17 May 2026	02-Apr-26	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
Education & Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator	16, 17 May 2026	02-Apr-26	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
Equalities Officer	16, 17 May 2026	02-Apr-26	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
Health & Safety Officer	16, 17 May 2026	02-Apr-26	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
Labour Link Officer	16, 17 May 2026	02-Apr-26	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
Communications Officers	16, 17 May 2026	02-Apr-26	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
International Officer	16, 17 May 2026	02-Apr-26	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
Environmental Officer	16, 17 May 2026	02-Apr-26	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
Branch Treasurer OLBA Training	28 May 2026 (9.30-13:00)	27-Apr-26	Online, via UNISON National Finance Team
Branch Treasurer OLBA Training	25 June 2026 (9.30-13:00)	25-May-26	Online, via UNISON National Finance Team
Welfare Officer Training	9, 16 September 2026 (10:00-13:00)	07-Aug-26	Online, via There for You
Branch Treasurer OLBA Training	10 September 2026 (10:00-13:00)	10-Aug-26	Online, via UNISON National Finance Team
Welfare Officer Training	11, 18 November 2026 (10:00-13:00)	12-Oct-26	Online, via There for You
Branch Treasurer OLBA Training	20 November 2026 (9.30-13:00)	19-Oct-26	Online, via UNISON National Finance Team

The Branch Officer Training courses running on 16-17 May 2026 will take place all day on Saturday and until 13:00 on Sunday.

Branch Officer Training Weekend Leeds

Saturday – Sunday 16, 17 May 2026



Branch Officer Training Weekend

Date:	Saturday – Sunday 16, 17 May 2026
Venue:	DoubleTree by Hilton Leeds
Apply by:	2 April 2026
Cost to Branches:	£250 residential (2 days with 1 night's accommodation on Saturday night) £100 non-residential (2 days)

This is always a big weekend in our Calendar, bringing together UNISON activists from across the region to learn and develop their skills together, make new contacts and extend networks.

These courses are designed for Branch Officials and committee members who have taken on responsibilities at Branch level. The courses will help develop the knowledge and skills needed for the different Branch roles.

This year we are holding the event at the Doubletree Hilton Hotel in Leeds. It promises to be a fantastic occasion and we are anticipating an increase in applications, so please book your place as early as possible to ensure that you do not miss out!

Courses

● Health and Safety Officer

This course covers the strategic role of organising Health and Safety Reps and members around health and safety issues. It is not suitable for Health and Safety Representatives who have not had any training or have only recently been trained. The course will look at the role of safety reps and the Branch, investigating hazards and members' complaints, agreements with the employer, and future planning.

● Labour Link Officer

This course helps new Labour Link Officers to understand their role within the branch, equip them with campaigning techniques, understand why politics are important in the branch and develop skills to encourage interest in political activity in the branch. In order to be able to undertake this role, members would need to pay into the Labour Link Campaign Fund and be individual members of the Labour Party.

● Communications Officer

This course is mainly for those branch activists who are already or wish to become involved in branch publicity, producing leaflets, newsletters and branch magazines. The course will be practical-based drawing on the skills of UNISON's publicity department. It will cover writing copy, headlines and captions plus explore how to use layout to best effect to produce finished newsletters.

● Branch International Officer

This course will examine in detail the role and function of Branch International Officers and how we can make 'international solidarity' a reality, not just a slogan. The course will look at UNISON's international priorities, the effect of globalisation on developing countries, and how branch-based activities can make a difference.

● Branch Secretary

This course is designed to help existing and potential Branch Secretaries to carry out their role effectively. As well as examining the role of the Branch Secretary and the branch itself, the course focuses on the skills branch secretaries need and look at developing a team approach to branch work.

● Chairing Meetings

The course is aimed at anyone who has to chair a formal trade union meeting, whether it be a Branch meeting, Branch Committee, Working Group or Self Organised Group. Find out how to practice the skills needed to run a meeting that is fair to all participants. This is suitable for all activists but especially Branch Chairs.

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● Branch Education Co-ordinator

Good education within the Branch is vital for making local organisation work. This course is for Branch Education Officers and will look at how to identify your Branch education needs, how to budget for education, and how to encourage and support representatives in training.

● Equalities Officer

Open to all Branch Equalities Officers and Branch Officers for Self Organised Groups. This course will help you to understand how discrimination affects members, what the union can do to tackle discrimination at work and how under-represented members can be encouraged to become involved in union activity.

● Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator

This course will provide Lifelong Learning Coordinators with the knowledge and skills to effectively establish UNISON's learning and skills agenda in their workplace and successfully support the work of others to achieve branch aims around learning and skills.

● Climate Crisis and Green Skills – Environmental Officer/ Green Reps

This course is designed to give branch activists the opportunity to get initial training as an Environmental Officer/Green Rep. It should enable you to understand the role that UNISON can play in tackling the challenges around climate crisis and to plan a strategy for your branch to engage around environmental issues on a workplace and wider level.

Branch Officer Equality Officer Training Courses

Courses will be organised throughout the year and will be advertised once dates have been set.

Black Members Branch Officer Training

The course is appropriate for branch Black Members' Officers and contacts.

Course aims:

- To define the role of a UNISON branch Black Members' Officer or contact
- To establish how to access resources, make useful links and develop strategies for supporting Black members in their branches
- To consider how to campaign and get equality issues on the recruitment and bargaining agenda
- To build a network of Black Members and encourage participation in the union

Disabled Members Branch Officer Training

The training is for disabled members and will focus on:

- Working for disability equality in UNISON
- Role of branch disabled members officer or contact
- Bargaining for workplace reasonable adjustments
- Disability campaigning and organising in your branch
- Support and resources
- It's also a great networking opportunity!

Women's Officer Training

The course is appropriate for branch Women's Officers.

Course aims:

- To define the role of a UNISON branch Women's officer or contact
- To establish how to access resources, make useful links and develop strategies for supporting women members in their branches
- To consider how to campaign and get equality issues on the recruitment and bargaining agenda.

Young Members Officer Training

The course is appropriate for branch Young Members Officers.

Course aims:

- To introduce young members branch officers to their role
- To consider the values of UNISON
- To explore how to influence UNISON structures
- To discuss how to organise young members in your branch
- To plan some work with young members in your branch

LGBT+ Branch Officer & Contact Training

This training is appropriate for all LGBT+ branch officers or contacts who want to find out more about getting active in the branch and LGBT+ organising in UNISON.

Course aims:

- Define the role of a LGBT+ branch officer or contact
- Know how to access resources, make useful links and develop strategies for supporting LGBT+ members
- Identify how to organise and campaign for equality and get equality issues on the bargaining agenda

Branch Treasurer OLBA Training

This one-day course will be delivered by UNISON's National Finance Team and will be delivered via Microsoft Teams.

This training is aimed at newly appointed Branch Treasurers and branch employed staff who have access to OLBA in their role. The course introduces UNISON's online branch accounting system (OLBA), how to set a budget and run reports and have an opportunity to work on live case studies.

Course registration will open prior to each course date and will be available online at <https://learning.unison.org.uk/events/> If a course is not showing online, then please check back later.

N.B. Completion of the Branch Treasurer and GDPR e-notes are a course requirement before attending the online workshops.

Course fees: Please note that there will be a charge to the branch of £30 per learner for OLBA training.



Welfare Officer Training

This two-half day session course will be delivered via Microsoft Teams. This course will be delivered by *There for You* tutors and bookings will be made via UNISON Nationally.

The course will help you to:

- Understand the role of the branch welfare officer and how to perform it effectively;
- Learn about UNISON's welfare charity *There for You* and its structure;
- Understand the role of the branch welfare officer and how to perform it effectively;
- Learn about UNISON's welfare charity *There for You* and its structure;
- Understand application forms and criteria, and how to process them;
- Understand the importance of promoting and publicising the work of UNISON's Welfare charity *There for You* in a variety of settings;
- Explore what confidentiality means for branch welfare officers;
- Understand and identify different communication styles;
- Practice active listening and communication skills;
- help members feel at ease and navigate potentially difficult conversations;
- handle problems in an assertive manner and explain any process that needs to be followed;
- understand how to set up a support system for yourself.

Course registration will open prior to each course date and will be available online at <https://learning.unison.org.uk/events/> If a course is not showing online, then please check back later.

N.B. Completion of the Branch Welfare and GDPR e-notes are a course requirement before attending the online workshops.

Course fees: Please note that there will be a charge to the branch of £30 per learner for Welfare Officer training.



How to apply

To apply for Regional courses, please complete an application form and send it to your Branch office for approval. An application form can be downloaded from our website at <https://yorks.unison.org.uk/apply-for-courses>

Alternatively, branches can email t.shearer@unison.co.uk giving the members name, membership number and email address, as long as training has been approved by the branch.

Cancellation Fees

We apply a cancellation fee for all course places where learners cancel their place close to the course running.

This applies for all courses (both face to face and virtual) where a place is cancelled within 2 weeks of the course start date.

This is because there are costs associated with running the courses whether they are online or in person.

Automatic exemptions can be applied in circumstances of

- Family bereavement
- Receiving treatment in hospital
- Where there is a waiting list, and the place is taken up by another learner

Branches can appeal cancellation costs by making an application to the region citing the reason for the cancellation. These appeals will be heard by a subcommittee of the Regional Committee.

For National courses please apply via the online link provided where the course has been advertised. To view this please visit: <https://learning.unison.org.uk/events/>



Contact details

**UNISON Yorkshire & Humberside Regional Centre,
Quayside House, Canal Wharf, Leeds LS11 5PS**

Yorkshire & Humberside website: <https://yorks.unison.org.uk/>

Learning & Organising Services website: <https://learning.unison.org.uk/>

Education Team email: yheducation@unison.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/unisonyh

Instagram: www.instagram.com/unisonyorkshumber/

X/Twitter: <https://twitter.com/unisonyh>

For National Courses you can contact UNISON Learning and Organising Services via email on: learningandorganising@unison.co.uk



Branch Officer Training & Awards Night

**Sat 16 & Sun
17 May**

**DoubleTree by Hilton,
Granary Wharf,
Leeds, LS1 4BR**

We're taking expressions of interest for our branch officer training in May. It's perfect if you're likely to be elected into one of these roles, or need a refresher. PLUS we're debuting our new annual awards night that weekend too!

- **Branch Secretary**
- **Branch Chair**
- **Education & Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator**
- **Equalities Officer**
- **Health & Safety Officer**
- **Labour Link Officer**
- **Communications Officer**
- **International Officer**
- **Environmental Officer**

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST NOW



Branch Officer Training & Awards Night

We are delighted to confirm the first UNISON Yorkshire & Humberside annual awards night will be held at our branch officer training weekend. They're to celebrate significant achievements by individuals, teams, branches and workplaces throughout the past 12 months. If you're attending the training, you'll be offered a place at the awards night - but if not, scan the QR code to register your interest!

Outstanding Union Representative

Honours a UNISON representative who has shown exceptional leadership, negotiation skills, and member support.

Best Collective Bargaining Achievement

Recognises a team or individual who played a key role in securing a successful bargaining agreement.

Equality & Inclusion Champion

Honours a member who worked to create a more inclusive and equitable union environment.

Most Improved Workplace Engagement

Celebrates a workplace that significantly increased union participation and collaboration.

Strike Solidarity Award

Celebrates outstanding support and unity during industrial action.

Skills Development Champion

Honours a member who helped others grow through skill-building and learning.

Union Legend Award

Celebrates a member whose legacy defines union strength and spirit.

Unsung Hero

Recognises a behind-the-scenes contributor whose work made a big difference.

Scan the QR code to
register your interest

